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LETTER OF GEN. BUTLER,

OF MASS.

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THE SALARIES OF PUBLIC OFFICERS.

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*THE VENALITY AND UNTRUTHFULNESS OF A  
PORTION OF THE PRESS.*

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HE SHOWS A CONSPIRACY TO BREAK DOWN THE REPUBLICAN  
ADMINISTRATION BY DENUNCIATION OF  
INCREASE OF SALARIES.

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BOSTON :  
PRESS OF ROCKWELL & CHURCHILL,  
122 WASHINGTON STREET.  
1873.







## CORRESPONDENCE.

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AMESBURY, April 18, 1873.

GEN. B. F. BUTLER:—

*My dear Sir,*— Since the adjournment of Congress, I have noticed in some of the daily papers many charges and insinuations, that the "Salary Bill," passed by that body, was a swindle and a steal, for which you are held to a great extent responsible.

Some of your constituents would be pleased to learn of the reasons which governed your action upon this question, among them,

Yours truly,

GEO. H. BRIGGS.

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## LETTER OF GENERAL BUTLER.

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### SALARIES, PUBLIC MEN, AND NEWSPAPERS.

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BOSTON, July 28th, 1873.

#### *NOT AFRAID OF THE QUESTION.*

DEAR SIR:— The apology due for not sooner replying to your kind note asking "the reasons which governed my action upon the question of the Increase of Salaries" is, that I have not wished to appear anxious to attempt to forestall opinion on that subject, or to rush to the defence of a measure that ought not to have been attacked.

It has never been discussed by its opponents, only abused, and Congress denounced. I have had, however, no fear but

the just judgment of the people, when it could be reached, would sustain it, and absolve those who voted for it from all wrong in action or intention.

*FUTURE SALARY CAN NOT BE OBJECTED TO.*

I am not aware that there has been any well-considered objection made to the increase of the salary of the President, the Vice-President, the Cabinet Officers, the Judges of the Supreme Court, or that of Members of Congress, when applied to the future. No one not blindly prejudiced, weighing the facts, can doubt the increase of the President's salary was proper, whether he looks at it as compensation for the services rendered, or as a reasonable and adequate support for the officer and family, in view of the requirements of his position, or as a proper recognition of the dignity and high station of his office; or compares it with the salary at first established in 1789. Twenty-five thousand dollars a year then, in their purchasing power, and in comparison with the incomes and emoluments of individuals, were five times more, to say the least, than now.

*OUR FATHERS GAVE THE PRESIDENT A SALARY BEFITTING HIS HIGH OFFICE.*

The great disparity between that sum and three thousand dollars, the salary of a member of the cabinet then, shows the estimation in which the fathers of the Republic held the office of President; else why make his emoluments eight times greater than those of his cabinet, besides furnishing him with a house, secretaries, servants, and equipage, even to the saddle on which he rode, and the wagon in which his marketing was brought home? And this disparity is further seen, because three thousand dollars was equal to the highest salaries then paid in business enterprises. How different the fact now! A better idea of the difference between money values then and now may be seen in the fact, that Washington, ten years afterwards, died, the second richest



man of that year, and his fortune was six hundred and fifty thousand dollars; and the very richest man and most successful merchant died that year, worth less than a million.

*PRIVATE FORTUNES ARE NOW RECKONED BY MILLIONS.*

Now there is more than one private fortune in the country which counts a quarter as many millions as Washington had thousands; and quite a number of men, in many States of the Union, whose fortunes are from ten to fifty times as much.

*A SALARY IN PROPORTION TO WASHINGTON'S GIVES GRANT  
\$275,000.*

Another fact will show the difference in value of a salary then and now. Take the difference in the amount of specie in circulation in the country at the two points nearest to the time of comparison of which we have official statistics; (see Report made to Congress, in 1854), — the year 1816, when there was seven and a half millions all told, and the year 1854, when there was a hundred and eighty-one millions.

Again, the difference in the numbers of the people who pay the salary seems to illustrate this point. Suppose, against the fact, no man in the country was richer now than in 1789, the problem may be stated thus: as three and a half millions of population who paid Washington's salary is to twenty-five thousand dollars, its amount, so is thirty-eight and a half millions, present population of the country, to a proportionate salary to General Grant. Give the President a salary in this proportion, and he would have, in round numbers, two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars a year, instead of fifty thousand, which Congress has now established. The same proportion of increase applied to the Cabinet officers, the Supreme Judges, and to members of the Congress, would nearly treble their present salaries. This proportion, and more, holds good in every trade or profession,

as to the price of services between Washington's time and now.

*A MECHANIC GETS TEN TIMES MORE NOW THAN THEN.*

The skilled mechanic who repaired the President's house in Philadelphia, in 1789, worked from sun to sun for fifty cents per day. The mechanic whom I desire to build my house at Washington, claims \$8 per day, and stipulates for ten hours' work only.

*A CONGRESSMAN SHOULD HAVE HIGHER PAY THAN CABINET OFFICERS.*

But in order to reproach members of Congress, it is said they should not have as high a salary as judges and cabinet officers, because the former are kept in Washington by their duties only a portion of the year. So far from that consideration having weight, it should be precisely the reverse. The short time for which members of the House are elected, necessitates that the member during his term of service must keep up two homes -- his house in which he dwells, which no prudent man would sell or dismantle for so short a term, and his house in Washington, if he lives in a house, as for his own sake, and that of his family, he ought to do; while the cabinet officer, appointed, as a rule, for four years, and the judge, appointed for life, with a retiring pension in old age, can make his only and permanent home at Washington.

*THE BILL EQUALIZES AND REDUCES SALARIES BY CUTTING OFF MILEAGE.*

Besides, so far as it relates to Congressmen, this bill has been entirely misrepresented, if not misunderstood. It does not so much increase the salaries of members as it equalizes them. Ever since the Constitution was adopted, the compensation of a member of Congress has been in part in the form of mileage. In the time of Washington it was fixed at thirty cents a mile, subsequently reduced, but always



causing very great inequality in compensation. As the population of the country extended itself, the mileage added largely to the emoluments of the distant Senators and Representatives, while the facilities of transportation by steamboat and railroad, especially if the member was complimented with a free pass, did not change the inequality ; so that there were members of the last Congress, who were receiving nearly, or quite, seven thousand five hundred dollars as compensation, while others were receiving only a few dollars over five thousand.

*BY ABOLISHING ALL ALLOWANCES AND PERQUISITES, IT MAKES BUT SMALL ACTUAL ADDITION TO PAY.*

The present bill abolishes all mileage, and thus reduces the pay of some members quite fifty per cent., while it raises that of others a like amount. Again, heretofore, divers allowances were made to members of Congress in the shape of newspapers, stationery, franking privilege, and other matters, which in the past have been overdrawn, and were abused by the selfish and grasping ; all of which were cut off by this bill, and nothing allowed except the actual certified expenses paid by the members in getting to and from the Capitol. To show the extent of this inequality in mileage in the past, take 1856 for example, when the delegate from Oregon received nineteen thousand dollars and upwards a year for his services, while the member from Philadelphia received a little over three thousand. Thus you will see, my dear sir, that there has been no such addition to the pay as has been pretended in the public journals, it being usually stated therein that every Congressman voted himself five thousand dollars additional pay, whereas the deduction of mileage and these allowances being made, there has not been really, on an average, more than one thousand dollars a year added, if so much ; but how much cannot exactly be known except by the experience of the results to members in the expense of carrying on their correspondence and doing the business of

their constituents, the member now paying his own postage even when addressing the President of the United States in the public service.

*THE NEWSPAPERS CONCEAL THE FACTS.*

I am inclined to think that this statement of the fact must be substantially new to you, and yet your letter shows that you have read the newspaper denunciations of the bill and their misrepresentations of its effect.

You will naturally inquire why have not these self-appointed guardians of the public morals given to the people a fair and just exposition of the facts, instead of gross misrepresentations of them? You may well do so, and this question I will endeavor to answer before I get through.

*SALARY IS NOT TOO LARGE WHILE AGENTS OF MILLS GET AS MUCH, AND CLERGYMEN \$25,000.*

I will not pursue this branch of the subject further, because I do not believe the salary, in the future, can be deemed too large by any right-minded man, specially when he considers that the services of an efficient agent of a manufacturing establishment of any considerable amount of capital cannot be procured for less than seven thousand five hundred dollars a year, and that, too, in a permanent situation, while our railroads pay twenty-five thousand dollars and upwards for the salaries of their presidents, and churches an equal amount to their clergymen.

*THE PEOPLE OUGHT TO ELECT REPRESENTATIVES WORTH AS MUCH AS EITHER.*

Ought not the people to elect representatives of their interests worth as much as the least of these amounts, if salary is to be reckoned as compensation for valuable services, or, viewed in the more proper light, as simply an adequate support of the member and his family, while doing his public duties? Indeed, the uncontroverted fact, that no member of the incoming Congress is reported to have refused to take his



increased pay monthly, — as has been the custom of Congress to do, — would seem to imply that by them, at least, it is deemed a proper and adequate amount only.

*MINISTER WASHBURNE SAYS "MEMBERS OUGHT NOT TO KEEP HALF A DOZEN MISTRESSES, OR BUCK THE TIGER"; BUT DOES NOT TELL WHAT THAT IS.*

A letter appears in the newspapers, purporting to come from Mr. Washburne, our Minister to France, upon the question of the sufficiency of the salary of members of Congress, in one portion of which I agree with him so far as I understand the language he uses. It says, "The people don't send their representatives to Washington to live like princes, buck the tiger and keep half a dozen mistresses."

Therefore I voted a salary sufficient to support the member's family at Washington, to guard him from temptation to such a multiplicity of mistresses. If Mr. Washburne's elegant innuendo is supported by the fact, the member should have his family with him. What exactly the Minister to France may mean by the undefined phrase, "buck the tiger," I am quite uncertain. I certainly never have seen anything in Washington that went by that name during my seven years' service in Congress. If the minister is familiar with it, it may account for the ability which he claims to live on a small salary.

*HE DOES NOT OBJECT TO TAKING "BACK PAY" AS MINISTER, HOWEVER.*

Still, I have not observed any objection on his part to the appropriation of fifty thousand dollars additional, passed in 1871, for the purpose of defraying the expenses in part of the Minister to France in 1870, although that appropriation was retroactive. Without this increase or "bucking the tiger," it would seem a little easier to live not "like a prince" and support a family in Paris, at \$17,500 gold, than to do the same in Washington on \$7,500 currency.

*IF TAKING BACK PAY IS "STEALING, SWINDLING, AND BOBBERY,"  
ALL PUBLIC MEN ARE EQUALLY GUILTY.*

If you, sir, have thus far agreed with me, and believe that the salary of a member ought to be what with the deductions it is in the future, then why should not the members of the last Congress receive a like amount?

The reasons why the pay was made applicable to the late Congress have never been alluded to or discussed; but the fact is the subject of the fiercest denunciation, to some of which you allude in your note. It has been called "a swindle," "a steal," "a grab," "a robbery;" the men receiving it have been denominated "thieves," "robbers," "grabbers," "plunderers." Indeed, all the vocabulary of Billingsgate has been exhausted in describing it. Let us now see if these are proper terms to be applied to the members of the National Legislature because of a constitutional and usual legislative act; and if so, how many of our public men and all classes of our citizens are subject to a like condemnation and to be branded with the same epithets.

*THIS IS SPECIALLY TRUE OF MASSACHUSETTS JUDGES, AND  
EXECUTIVE OFFICERS.*

If it can be made to appear — as is the fact — that from the beginning of the government to the present hour, every State Legislature and every Congress which has increased the salary of its members, has made that increase applicable to those who voted it, relating back to the beginning of their term of service; if it shall appear, confining ourselves now to the State of Massachusetts, where for a reason obvious to all, these newspaper denunciations have been the loudest, that every executive officer, every judge on the bench, when his salary was increased, has always taken "back salary;" — that is, salary which was raised retroactively to a time of service for which a lower pay was fixed by law, — then all these men are "thieves," "plunderers," "swindlers," "salary-grabbers," and "robbers."



*ALL OUR SOLDIERS HAVE RECEIVED BACK PAY.*

If it shall appear that all the brave men who, as soldiers, fought in the ranks, who, enlisting to serve for a certain bounty and pay, have petitioned Congress to give increased pay and bounty, and, believing it just, Congress has given it to them, and they have received it; then all these heroes who offered their lives to save their country are back-pay "grabbers," "thieves," and "robbers," as well as the members of the United States Congress.

*OUR MECHANICS HAVE RECEIVED BACK PAY FROM THE GOVERNMENT.*

If it shall appear that all mechanics in the employ of the government, before the eight-hour law was put in operation by the President's proclamation, who have petitioned Congress to give, and have received additional pay retroactively, after they had given a receipt in full for their services, then a great body of our mechanics are back-pay "grabbers," "salary-stealers," "robbers," and "plunderers," as much as the members of the United States Congress.

*ALL NEWSPAPERS "GRAB" BACK PAY WHEN THEY CAN AND LIBEL THOSE WHO GIVE IT TO THEM.*

Nay, further, if it shall appear that these censors of public morals—the newspapers themselves — have, for their own emolument, taken back pay retroactively, for services performed before the pay was raised, then they, too, come into this category of "grabbers," "thieves," and "swindlers;" and if the same newspapers have falsely maligned the legislators, holding at the same time their own back pay money in their pockets, then as to them additional epithets will spring to the lips of right-minded and just men, such as falsifiers, maligners and libelers.

*SALARIES HAVE BY ALL LEGISLATURES BEEN RAISED BACKWARDS.*

Salaries have been fixed six times in Congress — in 1789, in 1796, in 1816, in 1856, in 1866, and 1873; and each time, “back pay” was given to the beginning of the term for which the Congressmen voting it were elected. In every Legislature in this State — and so far as I can ascertain, in every other State wherein the pay has been raised — there has always been “back pay” to the beginning of the term for which the members of the Legislature voting it were elected. Since 1864, every principal executive and judicial officer in this State has had his salary raised retroactively; that is, going backward for a longer or shorter period, and every one has taken it. As an example, in the year 1866, the salaries of the Judges of the Supreme Court were raised one thousand dollars a year, to take effect from the first of January previously, — a clear case of “back salary.”

*MEMBERS OF LEGISLATURES, JUDGES AND OFFICERS ALWAYS TAKE  
“BACK PAY.”*

Now all these judges and officers, all these legislators, all these members of Congress, from the beginning, have taken the “back salary;” and until March, 1873, no man has ever returned it.

*SO DO WORKINGMEN, AND ARE GLAD TO GET IT.*

Again, you will remember that all the mechanics employed by the Government worked ten hours a day after the eight-hour law was passed for nearly a year, at a rate of wages agreed upon by themselves in the government employ, until the President, by proclamation, in spite of the opinion to the contrary of Attorney-General Hoar, gave the law, making eight hours a day’s labor in the government works its due effect. Then all these mechanics asked Congress — and a bill passed the House to that effect — that their pay might be raised backwards two-fifths during the term they had so been



employed. Are these working men also "thieves," robbers," and "back-pay grabbers"?

*SO DO SOLDIERS TAKE BACK PAY AND BOUNTY, AND ARE SORRY CONGRESS DOES NOT DO THEM JUSTICE AND GIVE THEM MORE.*

Again, during the war, our soldiers enlisted for certain bounty and pay which was then promised them as a part of their contract. Afterwards, an increase of pay and bounty was given by law to others, and all our soldiers asked therefore an increase of "back pay" and bounty to be given them; and bills for the equalization of bounty have been pressed upon the attention of Congress, and upon State Legislatures, although to pass them would be "giving back pay and back bounty for services already rendered." Are all our soldiers "back-pay grabbers," "thieves," and "robbers"? — for many of them have already taken increased "back pay" and bounty in lands and other emoluments. Have not the newspapers, and clergymen who are preaching against "back pay," undertaken a larger job than they can well carry through, in attempting to convict all classes of our fellow-citizens of being thieves and robbers?

*BETTER BE RIGHT WITH THE JUDGES, SOLDIERS AND WORKING-MEN THAN WRONG WITH THE NEWSPAPERS AND POLITICAL PARSONS.*

For myself, singular as it may seem to them, I prefer to be denounced, in company with the judges, the senators, the legislators, the executive officers of our State, the soldiers and workingmen of our State, than to be extolled by the newspapers, or the little clique of clergymen who are turning the churches into caucuses to gratify their personal spite.

*THE NEWSPAPERS ARE DEEPER IN THE MUD THAN ANYBODY ELSE.*

But say you to me: "You have not yet touched the newspapers. If the judges, legislators and others, are all

as deep in the mud as Congress is in the mire, still the newspapers are pure and white as snow."

*NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS ALWAYS LIVE ON THE GOVERNMENT  
WHEN THEY CAN.*

Let me give you a fact, of which you are, perhaps, unaware. Quite all the principal newspapers in the United States are supposed to maintain in Washington a correspondent, whose letters make their appearance under the head of "our special Washington correspondence." Now a very large majority of those newspaper correspondents have been for a great many years appointed clerks of the several committees of the House and Senate, by the chairman who has the right of appointment, generally upon the understanding that his newspaper shall glorify the chairman as an equivalent for the salary of the clerk who is thus supported as "correspondent."

*THE PAPERS COULD NOT HAVE GOOD ONES IF THEY DID NOT  
"STEAL" THEIR PAY FROM THE TREASURY.*

To write letters and discuss public questions so as to interest the people, the correspondent must be a man of very considerable literary and other ability who in fields of useful labor could command large compensation. Such men the Washington correspondents, with a few exceptions, are. The newspapers cannot afford to pay them their price, and therefore could not afford to retain them unless they contrived in this way to filch their support out of the Treasury.

*THEY ALWAYS HAVE AND ALWAYS WILL "GRAB BACK SALARY"  
AND VILIFY THOSE WHO VOTE IT.*

In different Congresses the pay of clerks of committees has been raised retroactively back to the beginning of the session, and in every instance each one of these newspaper correspondents — sometimes the editor himself being the clerk — has "grabbed" his back pay. In this



last salary bill the back-pay feature of which the newspapers so much denounce, the pay of these very newspaper correspondents, clerks of the two Houses, was raised fifteen per cent., going back to March, 1870, and every newspaper — and there was a large number who had clerks on committees — took back pay for two years, rolling it as a sweet morsel under their tongues, and then wrote and published virtuous articles denouncing the “back-pay grab.”

*THEY LOBBY FOR IT, TAKE IT, BUT NEVER RETURN IT.*

Let me state further what is within my personal knowledge, that these very clerks were upon the floor of the House when the bill giving them back pay was under consideration, lobbying for it furiously, and exhibiting most nervous fears lest it should fail. And although, by their calumnies and slanders, the newspapers have frightened a few men — who, as I believe, mistake cowardice for conscience, against their better judgment, for some of them voted and spoke for the increase of salary — into sending back their increased salary to the treasury, yet if any newspaper-man has sent any part of his “back pay” to the treasury, he has not made himself visible to the naked eye.

*NO ANSWER TO SAY THEY DO NOT VOTE IT: JUST AS BAD TO  
TAKE IT.*

The replies made in excuse for this are twofold: 1st. These men did not vote this compensation for themselves, and the Congressmen did. 2d. If wrong in these men, it does not aid you. Two wrongs do not make a right. I answer, if it was wrong to vote it, it was equally wrong to take it; and the men who denounce it so bitterly are simply insincere, and do it for a purpose, as I shall show, and not in the advocacy of the right.

*THE CONGRESSMAN MAKES NO CONTRACT NOT TO INCREASE HIS  
SALARY DURING HIS TERM.*

The objection against increasing the pay of that Congress, most frequently put forward, and which has affected the minds of some good men, is that a contract was in fact entered into between the member and the people, when he was elected, that he would serve his term for the compensation then stated by law. Nothing can be more groundless. There was no such contract; and a little examination of constitutional history will show to any candid and discriminating mind that there could in the nature of things be no such, either express or implied.

*THAT WHICH ALL GOOD MEN HAVE DONE AND SANCTIONED IS  
AS NEAR RIGHT AS YOU WILL GET.*

To the second, I reply, That which has been done in legislation from the foundation of the government, by the common consent of all good men, without substantial objection, must be taken in human affairs to be so nearly the right thing to be done as to justify whoever does it; and the use merely of hard language will not convince an intelligent people that that is a deep wrong and a crime which has been sanctioned by every good man in public and private life from the beginning of the government. I further contend that the increase of salary, made retroactive, was right in itself. I will show presently the constitutional power and duty of a member of Congress to fix the salary for himself, and what was his contract with his constituents at the time of his election, and some of the reasons why the salary ought to have been applicable to the then present Congress.

*CONGRESSMEN ARE OBLIGED TO VOTE THEIR SALARY UNDER  
THE CONSTITUTION.*

The mode of fixing and paying the compensation of members of Congress was much considered in the convention which framed the Constitution. One proposition was that they should receive pay from their States. That was opposed



by Madison, and other far-seeing men, on the ground that when politics changed in the State, the Legislatures would starve their members of Congress into submission to their will.

*IF THE PAY IS TOO LOW NOBODY BUT RICH MEN CAN REPRESENT THE PEOPLE.*

Another proposition was made that the out-going Congress should fix the pay for the in-coming Congress. That was rejected upon the same grounds that in case of a change in politics, the out-going Congress would cut off the means of living of the in-coming Congress. Again, it was proposed that the Senators, representing the wealth of the country, should have no pay; and that was advocated on the ground that rich men could only come to the Senate, or, in the words of Gouverneur Morris, when speaking upon this subject: "He was also against paying the Senators. They will pay themselves if they can; if they cannot, they will be rich and can do without; of such the second branch ought to consist, and none but such can compose it if they are not to be paid." Of course such a proposition was rejected then, as it would be now. For I take it, no man would desire that only rich men should go to the Senate.

*NO MAN OF WEALTH COULD NOT AFFORD TO VOTE A BILL IN FAVOR OF POOR MEN.*

And here I observe that all the men of large wealth in Congress did not vote for the increase of salary, with the single exception of the senior senator from Pennsylvania. They thought they could afford to vote against it, because it made no difference to them. Having means, through my professional services and income, by which I can live without any salary, I thought I could not afford to vote against the increase of salary; for being of the people, I deemed a poor man ought to have the opportunity of representing them in Congress, and if their Representative was not so well paid as to be able to live there, one

of two things must follow, either that he could not go, or, if he did go, he would be tempted to sell himself and his vote to get the means of living.

*PAY TO BE FIXED BY EACH CONGRESS EVERY YEAR FOR ITSELF.*

The final result was giving members adequate compensation, to be fixed by the votes of both Houses. Therefore, by the Constitution and practice, each Congress fixes the salary of its members, not only for a Congress, but establishes it every year when it passes the legislative appropriation bill; whether this is done the first day of the term, or the first day of the year, or the last day, can make no difference, because Congress alone determines its own compensation for itself during its term, and nobody else can do it.

*PAY, IF INCREASED AT ALL, MUST BE VOTED BY THOSE RECEIVING IT.*

Very much has been objected against the sincerity and integrity of the members voting this increase of salary, because, it is said, they voted to add to their own pay, to raise it from where it stood at the time they were elected.

A moment's reflection will show you, my dear sir, as well as every other reflecting man, that it is impossible ever to raise the pay of members of Congress, unless more or less of them do vote to increase their own pay. A large majority of the present members were re-elected to the next Congress. Their pay was fixed at a certain sum at the time of their election. If they increase that sum, for whatever cause, and make it applicable to the next Congress, then, in that case, the majority would be voting an increase of their own pay over and above the sum at which it stood at the time they were elected. And in the case of the Senate, as one-third of them only go out every two years, the pay cannot be raised at all unless the then present Senators vote to raise their own pay. So that the requirement of the newspapers, that no man shall ever vote to raise his own pay,

would simply render an increase of pay impossible from the beginning of the Government down to to-day.

*THE NEXT CONGRESS WILL FIX ITS OWN PAY.*

I see in the newspapers some senseless talk about repealing the salary-bill for the next Congress. There need be no repealing act. All that Congress has to do is to appropriate such amount as it deems proper for the salary of its members; and that becomes the law of the land, taking place of all other laws.

*ONLY CONTRACT MEMBER MAKES IS THAT HE WILL TAKE SUCH PAY AS CONGRESS VOTES.*

Therefore, it will be seen that the contract with the member of Congress, when elected, is that he will serve two years for such compensation as shall be determined at any time during the term for which he serves by his own vote in conjunction with those of his fellows. Or, in other words, he agrees to serve for such sum as he, in conjunction with his fellow-men, deems reasonable at any time during his term of service. On the contrary, the clerk of a committee does make a contract that he will serve for so much per day, during the Congress, and having made that agreement, being a newspaper correspondent or editor, he takes his increased pay in disregard of his contract, and writes denunciatory articles against receiving back pay, insisting on the sacredness of contracts.

*MR. HAWLEY DEMAGOGUES THE BILL, AS IT COST HIM NOTHING SO TO DO.*

It is a fact worthy of remark that very little objection was made in the debates in Congress to the increase of salary being made applicable to the present Congress. The question discussed was what the amount ought to be, rather than whether it should be made applicable to one Congress and not to another. I do remember, however, that Mr. Haw-



ley, of Connecticut, spoke very fluently upon the subject of our raising our own pay, as if it must not always be so done. That member, I hear, has refused to take his increased pay. But as he was elected to serve only three months in place of an able Representative of that State, who had deceased, and as his back pay would amount to but little more than his mileage, which must be deducted, his words did not produce so much effect as they might have done if they would cost him more, and if his course while in Congress had not convinced the House that his talk was the veriest demagoguery.

*THE CLASSES OF PUBLIC MEN WHO HAVE VOTED AND TAKEN  
"BACK PAY" FROM THE BEGINNING GIVEN.*

In order that you may see how far those who voted for and took their increased pay are justified in their action by the precedent and example of all public men, although I have stated it in general because the present members of Congress are so vindictively denounced by name, and threatened to be "stamped with infamy," let me mention the men who have done precisely the same thing, only to a greater extent, so far as an increased per cent. on salary goes, — men who have been honored in every relation in life by their countrymen, and upon whom no harsh criticism for this cause has ever, to my knowledge, been made.

*WASHINGTON AND THE REVOLUTIONARY FATHERS TOOK BACK PAY  
AND ARE NOW DENOUNCED.*

In 1796 the question of giving back pay to the members during the whole of the Congress was so little regarded that the yeas and nays were not called in either House, so that we do not know how our patriotic and pure fathers voted upon this increased-pay question. But we do know that their salary bill gave to themselves pay back from the beginning of the Congress. What a set of "thieves," "swindlers," "salary-stealers," and "back-pay grabbers," those old

Revolutionary fathers of ours were, to be sure! And how Washington ought to have been denounced then, and is catching it now, from the newspapers, over General Grant's back, for signing that back-pay bill!

*IN 1818 WEBSTER, JUDGE MCLEAN, R. M. JOHNSON, TIMOTHY PICKERING "STOLE" THEIR BACK PAY.*

In 1818, however, I find that John McLean, of Ohio, afterwards the honored and pure Judge of the Supreme Court for so many years, and thrice a candidate for the Presidency, voted for his own "back pay." Richard M. Johnson, raised to the Vice-Presidency afterwards, voted with him; and Timothy Pickering, whom both the Country and the Commonwealth delighted to honor, and whose memory is one of the glories of old Essex, where you and I live, "stole" his back pay by his own vote, in company with Daniel Webster; all of whom are now to be branded for so doing as "thieves" by the newspapers, which declare that public men now ought to receive such designation for doing the same thing.

*IN 1856 EIGHT MASSACHUSETTS MEMBERS VOTED BACK PAY IN THE HOUSE, AND THE BILL WAS PASSED BY ONE VOTE.*

In 1856, on the last night of the session, the pay of members of Congress, in addition to mileage, was made applicable backwards to the beginning of the Congress, and the salary was raised more than 67 per cent. besides the prior allowance for newspapers, stationery and books, as fixed when they were elected, or the "contract," as it is now claimed, was made. The vote stood one hundred in favor, to ninety-nine against, in the House. Of the eleven representatives of Massachusetts, eight voted for increased back pay and three failed to vote, when one negative vote would have defeated the bill. That vote also was in favor of an amendment providing, that the increase should apply "to the Congress then sitting, from the beginning of the same."

*IN SENATE BACK PAY WAS VOTED BY MORE THAN TWO THIRDS. HALE, TRUMBULL, BELL AND WILSON VOTED FOR IT. ALL TOOK IT.*

In the Senate, on a direct vote retaining the back-pay clause of the bill, it was sustained by twenty-seven to twelve, or more than two-thirds, among whom were Douglas, Fish of New York, Hale of New Hampshire, Trumbull of Illinois, Bell of Tennessee, and Wilson of Massachusetts.

Senator Wilson also made a speech in favor of increasing the salary, stating in substance, if he should die to-night he had not money saved from his salary wherewith to buy a pine coffin.

*VICE-PRESIDENT WILSON'S SPEECH ON THE "SMALL GAME" OF SMALL POLITICIANS COMMENDED TO SPEAKERS AT HAMILTON HALL.*

He also administered a rebuke to the small politicians and editors who seek to make political capital out of the pay-business in the following words, which I commend to some of the speakers at Hamilton Hall:—

"I do not believe any party can make anything at this time, when we spend \$75,000,000 annually to carry on this Government, by opposing the payment of a reasonable compensation to members of Congress. If anybody undertakes that small game, I believe he will be frowned down by the good sense of the people."

We are now spending \$350,000,000 to carry on the government. An increase in the same proportion would give a salary of \$15,000, but the "small game" of the detractors of public men increases with the salary.

*WILSON AND WASHBURNE CONTRASTED AS ECONOMISTS.*

Now, we know Mr. Wilson lived as an economical man, "not like a prince," one who did not keep half a dozen mistresses, and, so far as we can guess what that may be, did not "buck the tiger;" yet we have his public declar-



ation as to the sufficiency of his Congressional salary. Mr. Washburne, who as minister took from Congress an extra allowance while receiving \$17,500 in gold, in Paris, a cheaper capital to live in than Washington, says he laid up money on his salary. Let these eminent gentlemen settle the matter between themselves. Douglas, Wilson, Bell of Tennessee, Seward and Fish, sought and received the voices of their countrymen for the highest office, but are now to be "stamped with infamy."

*IN 1866 PAY RAISED 67 PER CENT. BY ONE VOTE: TWO MASSACHUSETTS MEMBERS IN FAVOR, ONE AGAINST, AND SIX DODGED.*

In 1866, the salary of members of Congress was again increased to \$5,000, or 67 per cent., retaining mileage, stationery, postage, newspapers, and other allowances, "to be computed from the first day of the present Congress," or back pay for sixteen months; so by that the "back salary" of each member was nearly doubled.

*GOVERNOR WASHBURN, MINISTER WASHBURNE, AND ALL THE WASHBURNES DODGED THE VOTE BUT TOOK THE MONEY.*

The bill passed by a vote of 51 yeas in the House to 50 nays, two members from Massachusetts, Banks and A. H. Rice, voting in the affirmative; two members, Boutwell and Eliot, voting in the negative, and six members, to wit, John B. Alley of the 5th district, Ames of the 2d district, J. D. Baldwin of the 8th district, H. L. Dawes of the 10th district, Samuel Hooper of the 4th district, and Wm. B. Washburn, now His Excellency the Governor, of the 9th district, did not vote, or, in Congressional parlance, — quite as elegant as "buck the tiger," — "dodged the vote." To these add Elihu B. Washburne and Henry D. Washburne; indeed the whole Washburne family "dodged."

*GENERAL SCHENCK, THAD. STEVENS AND JOHN F. FARNSWORTH  
VOTED FOR IT.*

Robert C. Schenck and Thaddeus Stevens, honored and leading statesmen, voted and spoke in favor the bill.

And John F. Farnsworth, who is now so loud in his denunciation of back pay, and desires to distribute it to the counties in his district, since he lost his election, not only took his increased pay, back and forward, but voted and carried it by his vote.

*ANY ONE OF THE "DODGERS" COULD HAVE BEATEN THE "GRAB."  
NONE OF THEM HAVE EVER BEEN BLAMED FOR NOT DOING IT.*

It will be observed that if any one of our six representatives who "dodged," had voted in the negative, the bill would have been lost. Each, however, was either absent from his post of duty, or refused to answer to his name. Yet who denounced them for remissness in duty, in suffering a back-pay-increase-of-salary bill to pass?

*TWO EDITORS IN CONGRESS — RAYMOND AND BALDWIN — AS BAD  
AS THE REST.*

Another member who "dodged" this vote, but took his money, when his vote would have defeated the bill, was Henry J. Raymond, editor of the New York "Times." His action, and that of my former colleague, Mr. Baldwin, editor of the "Worcester Spy," who also "dodged" the vote, but took his money, demonstrate that editors, when in Congress, are no more honest or watchful of the public treasury, or opposed to back-pay "steals" and "back-salary grabs" than other men.

*BACK PAY VOTED IN THE SENATE BY MORE THAN TWO TO ONE—  
CRESWELL, HOWARD, TRUMBULL AND WILSON VOTED FOR IT.*

When the bill went to the Senate, this "back-pay grab" and "increase in the future for the senators themselves" passed by a vote of thirty-three to thirteen. Among those voting in its favor, I find the honored names of Creswell, now a

member of the Cabinet; the late lamented Howard, of Michigan, Trumbull, and Wilson. Thus these honored statesmen, and specially the Vice-President, again gave me the precedent of voting an increase of salary and back pay.

The newspapers say that the men who take the back pay are as bad as those who voted it. So far I agree with them.

*SENATORS SUMNER, WILSON AND BOUTWELL, GOVERNOR WASHBURN, MR. DAWES, AND EVERYBODY ELSE TOOK BACK PAY.*

Every member of the Massachusetts Delegations for 1856 and '66, including Mr. Sumner, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Boutwell, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Dawes, Governor Washburn, Elihu B. Washburne, and all the Washburnes, and all other members of the House and Senate for those years took their "increased back pay" and all allowances, and were not denounced by the newspapers or anybody, but all were returned to the House, re-elected to the Senate, made Governors, Secretaries of the Treasury, Ministers abroad, or promoted to high offices by election and appointment.

*AND THE PEOPLE SUSTAINED THEM IN "GRABBING" IT.*

How is it, then, that all these "back-pay stealers," "salary grabbers," and "swindlers" have been sustained by the people? Why were they not "stamped with infamy"? What difference in the cases can be shown, save that the Congress of 1873 gave up its mileage and franking privileges, while the Congress of '66 retained all their perquisites? How has the contract been changed? Was not each Congress elected under a lower pay established by law?

*IT IS AS HONORABLE TO VOTE FOR IT AND TAKE IT AS TO DODGE AND TAKE IT.*

The action of the former representatives of Massachusetts has been justified. Was it because the majority of them "dodged," and thus let "I dare not" wait upon "I would"? Is "dodging" the vote and taking the salary to be deemed more honorable and honest than openly voting for the salary



and then taking it, when one believes so doing to be just and right?

*THE NEWSPAPERS DENOUNCE THESE HONORABLE MEN FOR THIS,  
NOT GENERAL BUTLER WHO THINKS THEY DID RIGHT.*

Mark me, I make no criticism on these gentlemen. I think they did right in voting for an increase of salary; I think they did right in making it retroactive; I think they did right in taking it. If they were absent from their seats when the vote passed, I have not a word to say except of regret that I am not sustained by their votes as I am by their action in taking the money. But if either of the six out of ten of Massachusetts men were there and "dodged" the vote and afterwards took the money, I have only one observation to make, and that is, the people of the Commonwealth know and believe that I never "sneak."

*GEN. BUTLER ONLY FOLLOWED THE EXAMPLE OF ALL CHRISTIAN  
STATESMEN WHO HAD GONE BEFORE.*

Thus you will see, sir, that if in this regard I went wrong, I had every possible precedent to mislead me. I acted under all the light I had, and followed the examples set me for more than a half-century by the greatest and best of all our public men. I had been taught to revere the elder of them in my youth, and in manhood saw the younger honored, praised, flattered, trusted, promoted. I was told and believed that many of them were praying, god-fearing, Christian men. I saw them welcomed into all churches, religious assemblies, and heard their teachings from all religious platforms. How could I know that this thing which was right when done by them, was "swindling," "stealing," "back-pay grabbing" and "robbery," when done by me? By what rule of ethics or morals could I be guided in this behalf, if not by the precept, the example, the action of such men, and the justification of that action by the many times repeated votes of the people?

*THE SOLDIERS TAKE THEIR BACK PAY AND BOUNTY AS READILY AS A CLERGYMAN TAKES HIS.*

Let us not forget also that this "back-pay" salary bill contained in itself a back-bounty bill to all the patriotic soldiers who enlisted at the beginning of the war with little bounty, and that the soldiers took their "back pay" to the amount of sixty-five millions, as readily and conscientiously as a clergyman would take his "back pay" in the donations of a surprise party of his parishioners given in token that his salary was too small and they desire to make it up to him.

*ONLY A LITTLE MORE THAN ONE-EIGHTH OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE AND ONE-SIXTH OF THE SENATE HAVE BEEN FRIGHTENED INTO RETURNING THEIR PAY.*

In view of these facts, you say, "Why, then, do so many members of Congress return their pay to the Treasury now?" I have heard, more or less apocryphally, that some thirty odd out of two hundred and forty odd members of the House, and thirteen or fourteen of the seventy-four members of the Senate, have so done.

*THEY MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE THAT PETER DID WHEN HE WAS SCARED INTO DENYING HIS MASTER.*

The country may well thank God that no more of its public men can be frightened out of their propriety by vituperation and senseless clamor. For I repeat again, in my judgment, no man believes that one of those who have returned their pay, did it for any other motive than because he feared it would not be popular, and might endanger his future to take it. Nor does this argue that they may not be good men, or courageous in action. Peter, on whose steadfastness, as on a rock, Christ founded his church, who, overpowered by numbers, alone of all the disciples drew his sword in defence of his master, and smote the servant of the high priest, when he found himself among the servants of Pilate, on the unpopular side, denied the same master for whom he had fought, and who had wrought a miracle to repair the wrong he

had done, until the cock crew shame on him thrice; then he went out and wept bitterly; as those who have yielded what they believed to be right, because they thought it unpopular, will hereafter lament what they have done. I am further impelled to say this, because I have not heard of one of these gentleman who has refused to have his increased pay for the future. I wish I could believe those who have returned their pay were actuated from none but motives of conscience, for they would have my highest respect, however much I might criticise their acts. By so doing, they have criticised my motives and my judgment in action, and they must pardon me if I remark upon theirs.

*CONSCIENCE WAS NOT THE MOTIVE FOR RETURNING THE PAY.  
NOBODY EVER DID IT BEFORE.*

I should not dare to attribute the return of their pay to the treasury, save to conscience alone, were it not for this fact, that heretofore no human being has ever acted as if he thought it against conscience, or in any way wrong, to take increased pay for service to the government retroactively or prospectively. It has been done by all classes of men everywhere who have gone before us, since the beginning of the republic, and not one dollar has ever been returned until March, 1873. Why has not this been done before, or why is it done now? Because never before has there been any considerable outcry against taking the increased salary by the press. Never has there been any substantial denunciation of the men who voted an increase of pay, or objection, except, perhaps, in 1815, at the close of a war, when, because of the poverty of the country, the increase was thought too great; then, however, it was only blamed as an error of judgment. I must and do conclude, that as conscientious men have lived before, as do now. Indeed, if I listened to the newspaper accounts of our public men, I should think that the men who lived in former times only were pure, and the only corrupt men live now. Yet, let me repeat, no public



man of the olden, and therefore pure time, was moved by his conscience to return his money. Nay, the statesmen of 1856 and 1866, who were in Congress, have not returned their back pay which they then took, although some of them have returned the pay they took last spring. How, then, can I believe their action to be from the promptings of conscience, and not the promptings of fear? Heretofore men taking increased pay had nothing to fear. Now they act as if frightened by newspaper clamor.

*SENATOR MORTON RETURNED HIS PAY ALTHOUGH HE SAID IN HIS SPEECH THAT IT WAS NOT ENOUGH.*

Let us examine the grounds, not too unkindly, upon which some gentlemen must stand, who have sent back their pay. I see it stated in the papers, that Senator Morton, of Indiana, has returned his pay. And yet, in the Senate, when the proposition was to increase the salary from \$5,000 to \$6,500, I find he used this language, as reported in the "Congressional Globe :"—

"If I am to have the name of having my salary increased I want it substantially increased. I want it increased in such a way as to amount to something. The increase here, giving \$6,500 for salary, in lieu of mileage, stationery, and newspapers, would be an increase to me of about \$800. I prefer to let it stand as it is rather than to have such a change as that makes. Everybody, who knows anything about the cost of living in this city, knows that there are but very few members of Congress who can save \$500 a year from their salary. I do not believe there are twenty members of this body who can save fifty dollars a month from their salary during the session of Congress, while many of them spend the whole of it, and some two or three times the amount."

Senator Morton's only objection to the bill then was expressed in these words :—

"I hope we shall increase the salary of the President anyhow. If that is not done in two days it cannot be done for four years under the Constitution, but we can act in regard to the rest of them at the next Congress."

Not a word against the salary applying to the Congress, voting it. How could Mr. Morton return his pay in

view of such declarations except from the fear of the lash of the newspapers, which he mistook for public indignation?"

*THE VICE-PRESIDENT COULD NOT TAKE HIS PAY AS SENATOR BECAUSE OF A CONTRACT, BUT BREAKS THE SAME CONTRACT AS VICE-PRESIDENT.*

Again, the newspapers tell me that Vice-President Wilson has returned his increased pay and written a letter saying he cannot take it, because his election was a contract to serve for \$5,000 a year, the sum fixed by law at the time.

I do not understand this to be so, and I do not see how he can. When he was elected to the Senate at first, the pay was eight dollars a day; yet in 1856 he voted and spoke in favor of its being raised, both prospectively and retroactively, to \$3,000 a year. Did not his first election make a contract to serve for a little more than half that sum as valid as the contract made by his last election?

In 1866, again, he voted to raise his salary from \$3,000 to \$5,000, although he had been re-elected, making, as he now supposes, another contract to serve for the less sum. Again, he was elected Vice-President; his votes counted for him as Vice-President; he accepted the office and resigned his seat in the Senate to take it, while the salary of the office stood by law at \$8,000 a year. By the new bill, the Vice-President's salary was raised to \$10,000 a year. If there can be any such thing as a contract for a salary fixed by a man's election, how, with Mr. Wilson's view of that contract, can he take the advanced salary of the office of Vice-President? Yet, almost at the very time when he returned his increased salary as Senator, on the ground he had made a contract that he should serve for \$5,000 a year and he could take no more, he gave his receipt to the Treasury for his increased salary as Vice-President, at the rate of \$10,000 a year, although by his own showing there was a contract when he was elected and accepted, to serve for \$8,000, — a contract which he could

not break as Senator but at the same moment did break as Vice-President by taking his increased salary.

What must be the political stress of weather that thus makes men go back upon themselves and vilify their own conduct in the past to justify themselves in the present!

*AS TO MEMBERS WHO RECEIVE THEIR MONEY AND USE IT FOR  
ELECTIONEERING PURPOSES.*

There is another class of members of Congress whose action in this regard seems intended as a criticism upon my course. They will pardon me if I examine theirs.

Those gentlemen have taken their back pay and devoted it to a chosen purpose, sometimes charitable and sometimes otherwise. Perhaps one of the best illustrations of such disposition of the money is the action of my colleague from the 8th district, the Hon. Geo. F. Hoar. He drew his increased salary and with it endowed an institution for the education of youth in his district. If he had a right to take that money, he certainly had a right to keep it. If it was not money honest enough to keep, then it was not money honest enough to take. If it was not honest enough money for him to spend for his own purposes, certainly the ingenuous youth of his district ought not to be contaminated by being educated with dishonestly acquired money. Devoting ill-gotten gains to charity does not clean the money. May I remind my colleague that his way of spending bad money is not even original. He is guilty of plagiarism. The chief priests devoted the thirty pieces of silver they got of Judas to buying a Potter's field for the charitable purpose of burying the dead; but it is called the "field of blood" even unto this day.

*MR. GEO. F. HOAR, JUDGE HOAR, AND EDITOR BALDWIN ALL TAKE  
"BACK PAY" AND PUT IT "WHERE IT WILL DO THEM THE  
MOST GOOD."*

One gets great glory, however, by founding public institutions. It is a favorite method of electioneering of those poli-



ticians who electioneer through the use of money. Every man has a right, however, to do with his own money as he pleases; and treating it as his own money, nobody can criticise the use which my colleague made of that four thousand and odd dollars of "back pay." Every man may do what he likes with his own money. Generally, he will buy that which he needs most. Some men need glory, and therefore purchase it; some men need butcher's meat. I buy butcher's meat with my "back pay." My advice to him, however, would have been, to use his back pay as his brother did, when he took "back pay" as Supreme Judge; and as his predecessor, of the same district, Mr. Baldwin, the editor, used his, in 1866 — take it and "put it where it will do the most good." Perhaps my advice has been followed. That is precisely what my colleague thinks he has done!

*BAD AS IT IS, BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS WANT THE BACK PAY FOR THEIR PURPOSES.*

To one who takes for granted all that is said upon "back pay," there seems a very curious state of public morals. While, on the one hand, its acceptance by members of Congress is declared the acme of all that is dishonest, on the other, I, and I doubt not, my colleagues, have received numbers of applications from religious and charitable institutions to devote our increased pay to carrying on their pious and benevolent enterprises, generally accompanied with an intimation that the money is hardly honest enough for us to keep.

*THIS SHOWS WANT OF SINCERITY IN THOSE WHO DENOUNCE IT.*

If the applicants verily believed that the money was dishonestly obtained, they must perceive it is not fit to build churches or carry on religious or benevolent enterprises with it. The utter obliviousness of such applicants, who must be good Christian men, with correct moral perceptions to the trite old maxim, "The receiver is as bad as the thief," coupled with the appropriation of their increased salary by several

members of Congress, to the use of schools, the Washington Monument, to the use of their constituents, and other like purposes, convinces me that there is no sincerity in the cry that a great crime and wrong has been done by Congress in passing the salary bill. Else the entire moral perceptions of the religious and charitably disposed in the community are obscured by their desire of gain, as well as those of Congressmen by their desire to win popular applause.

*THE PRESS SO GENERALLY DENOUNCE IT BECAUSE THEY ARE GRIEVED BY THE LOSS OF THEIR FRANKING PRIVILEGE.*

How, then, is the apparent unanimity of the press and of political assemblies, in their animadversions upon the salary measure, explainable? Nothing can be easier. The denunciations of the bill began with the Democratic papers, in hopes to injure the President and his administration, by the usual party slang, holding him responsible for it, as he could have prevented the passage of the bill by his veto, and to impute corruption to him, as his salary was thereby raised. But the press, of all parties and denominations, were excited against Congress, because when the franking privilege, which made their exchanges and their county circulation free, was abolished, Congress refused to make any exception in favor of the newspapers, and required them to pay postage, as other people pay theirs. Whereupon there came up petition after petition, from every part of the United States where there were newspapers, unanimously beseeching Congress, while they might abolish the franking privilege for everybody else, to save the newspapers from its operation. But, as the press had been howling for its abolition for years, Congress wisely, I think, abolished it for all, — for Congressmen as well as the newspapers, — making it fall, “like the dews of heaven, upon the just and unjust.” Therefore the whole press chimed with the opposition press in combining to punish Congress for taking away their perquisites.

*CONGRESSMEN WERE FRIGHTENED INTO CONDEMNING THE ADMINISTRATION.*

This groundless and senseless howl frightened members of Congress of both parties, who behaved as foolishly as scared men in a panic usually do, each Republican member or Senator seeming to forget that his act in paying back his increased salary to save himself was simply a condemnation of the President and the administration he claims to support as well as his colleagues, who had acted in the matter differently, but with as much purity of purpose as he had done.

*MEN WERE ALSO FRIGHTENED INTO DENYING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN CREDIT MOBILIER.*

To what extremes of folly fright will drive public men, we have had lately some notable examples. Many of our foremost men had bought *Crédit Mobilier* stock, doubtless believing that they had a right to buy it, and receive the dividends that might accrue, and, of course, in the expectation that those dividends would be large. But when in the midst of a campaign, their own re-elections, and the success of their party were involved, how many men foolishly, causelessly, and from sheer fright, denied the fact! Some saved their consciences by evasive denials,—intended to be received by the public as full and complete,—to a frank and courageous mind, the meanest of all possible concealment. Others, taking more liberties with their consciences to more fully satisfy their constituencies, made full, formal, and clear denials, which have since been shown to have been needlessly false; a fact which the country mourns as an ascertained and proved blight on the good name and fame of those she has trusted, for which there is now neither excuse nor palliation, save fear alone!

*RELIGIOUS PRESS JOIN WITH THE OTHERS BECAUSE POLITICIANS PAY THEM.*

But, say you, "Can it be that the small matter of postage could induce the religious press to have joined



with their fellows in the cry against Congress?" Alas! smaller inducements than that have determined the political action of the so-called religious newspapers.

AS GOOD MEN MAY DOUBT THIS POSITION, SWORN EVIDENCE IS PRODUCED.

I know that the good, true, pious, conscientious men and women, whose purity of life and conduct so command the respect of all men, that all claim to imitate, if not to emulate, can hardly credit this statement of mine, or believe that their paper, which they think is almost religious enough to read on the Sabbath, instead of the Bible, can be controlled by politicians. "To the pure all things are pure;" and Christian men are slow to believe evil of others, especially of those who profess better things. Therefore I will give you the proofs. You, as one of my constituents, will remember, that I had one contested election in my District, and, in that contest, some of the "religious," and most all of the secular press were opposed to me. You will see how it came about, from the sworn testimony taken while preparing for trial a suit to recover the unpaid political expenses of my opponents. Read, reflect, and cease to wonder. The *virus* has not done working yet: —

EXTRACTS FROM THE DEPOSITION OF ————, SWORN TO THE 10TH OF OCTOBER, 1870.

*Question.* You were Secretary of the Dana Committee, I believe, the organization which ran that campaign?

*A.* I was.

*Q.* Were there any records of the doings and actions of that committee?

*A.* There was a regular journal kept.

*Q.* In whose handwriting?

*A.* In the handwriting of . . . . a clerk of the committee, I afterward certifying their correctness.

*Q.* While you were acting Secretary, were all the transactions of the committee entered in the record?

*A.* Well, a general record of the transactions. I think every individual transaction was recorded, not in detail, of course, and hardly in language which would convey to an outsider the exact character of our doings, or the object really sought to be accomplished by many of our votes.

Q. Can you state how much money was raised, and how?

A. I cannot; I never knew. I do not think a majority of the committee ever knew.

Q. What measures were taken, if any, to procure articles in any of the newspapers?

A. We made an appropriation for the purchase of the “. . . . .” “. . . . .” of their editorial columns, for which we were to furnish the articles, and pay them—I do not remember how much—not over five hundred dollars.

Q. You were to write the articles, and the “. . . . .” was to publish them?

A. Yes, sir; the “. . . . .” was to publish whatever the committee sent them.

Q. What other papers were subsidized?

A. I do not know of any other within the district. What arrangements were made with the “Salem Gazette,” I never knew. Most of the “Gazette” Extras or Supplements, issued during the campaign, were furnished to them all printed by the committee. Wright & Potter have never been paid for printing “Gazette” Extras, of which they furnished twelve thousand. Outside of the district, I know that Mr. R . . . . . P . . . . . W . . . . ., in a speech before the committee, expressed an opinion upon the importance of securing the influence of the *Religious Press* of Boston, which could be obtained by a subscription to the Sabbath-School Fund; and on motion it was voted that Mr. W. . . . . be a committee to make such an arrangement. I do not know how much the Orthodox Sabbath-School Fund made out of the operation; but this I do know, that in their next issues the *Religious Press* of Boston declared against General Butler being returned to Congress. One incident which fixes this upon my mind was this, that there having been during the day after this vote several passages between Mr. W. . . . . and myself, at the next meeting of the committee I read the record as if it were written as follows:—“On motion, voted that R . . . . . P . . . . . W . . . . . be appointed a committee to visit Boston, and buy up the religious papers;” to which objection being made to the form of expression, I read the record as I had written it; “that Mr. W. . . . . be appointed a committee to visit the religious papers of Boston, and request their influence for the Dana movement;” when it was passed and approved.

Q. Explain, if you please, how subscribing to the Sunday-School Fund was supposed to influence the religious papers to make attacks upon the Republican candidate.

A. Mr. W. belonged to the Orthodox ring. I and many other members of the committee did not; but we all understood that we had made an appropriation for the purchase of a part of the machinery of the church, and it made but little difference to us into which department our money went, so that its newspapers attacked Gen. Butler. By subscribing to a Sabbath-

School Fund, we did a commendable act, one with which no one could find fault, and for which we were to receive an equivalent. We placed it beyond the power of any profane man to say we had subsidized the religious papers of Boston; on the contrary we had only subscribed to the Sabbath-School Fund. Had our records fallen into the hand of the enemy, the transaction would read better in that form.

*Q.* Where are those records now?

*A.* In the possession of our chairman.

I do not believe the treasurer's records of any "Sabbath-School Fund" will show it ever got much. If so, let them be produced.

*HOW GEN. BUTLER LOST THE "BOSTON DAILY NEWS" — HURRAH FOR THE PALLADIUM OF OUR LIBERTIES!*

Let me give another illustration of how newspapers are controlled in their political action on moral questions. You will remember that the "Boston Daily News," devoted to temperance and money-making, sustained my canvass for governor two years ago. Well, last spring, Governor Washburn naturally desired a re-election, and being a religious man, as naturally desired the support of the good people who are in favor of temperance; and therefore subscribed three thousand dollars to the "News," and got it. I lost it. I did not get "back salary" enough so that I thought I could afford to buy it. I have other instances of newspaper venality, which they call independence, which I can and may give you hereafter, so that you can be fully prepared at the next Fourth of July celebration to answer to the FIFTH REGULAR TOAST, "THE PALLADIUM OF OUR LIBERTIES — AN UNBOUGHT, UNPURCHASABLE, AND PURE PRESS."

*POLITICIANS GET RESOLUTIONS PASSED IN CONVENTIONS AND LEGISLATURES AGAINST INCREASE OF PAY TO KILL OFF THEIR RIVALS.*

The apparent unanimity of political assemblies in their resolutions against this measure can be quite as easily explained. Every legislature and every convention contains



several aspirants waiting eagerly for a place in Congress from their respective districts. Anything that strikes the incumbent down is at once seized upon by those who want his seat. How easy, under the protection of newspaper calumny, apparently so unanimous, for an aspirant for Congress to rise in a political convention and offer a resolution denouncing the "back-salary grab," written, without knowledge of his country's history, with a demagogue's pen, for a demagogue's purpose. The members of the convention also may care nothing about the question, and, if they do, have neither knowledge of the facts nor opportunity to defend the measure, and it is allowed to pass. Specially, as whoever should oppose it would be published in the newspapers as a "thief and robber," and accused of complicity in every crime. No one cares to mix himself up with an apparently unpopular question without cause. What a convenient weapon with which to kill a political rival! and especially when the resolution can deftly couple the increase of salary with "Crédit Mobilier plunders," and other sounding phrases with which demagogues vainly endeavor to mislead an intelligent people. Most probably neither the mover nor the convention reflect that an increase of the salary of a member of Congress to an adequate amount is the only antidote and preservative of the purity of Congress from Crédit Mobilier and kindred speculations by members in the attempt to get money with which to support themselves and their families at the capital. Such resolutions, whether passed in legislatures or in party conventions, are not the index of the popular judgment or the pulsations of the popular heart. They are political tricks, which at worst can only mislead for the hour.

#### *THE GROUNDS OF GEN. BUTLER'S ACTION.*

I have given some of the grounds, as I understand them, upon which this measure may with safety wait the decision of a righteous-judging people. Allow me further only to answer in

a word, more directly your question "as to the reasons which governed your [my] action upon this question."

*HE IS FALSELY ACCUSED.*

Let me premise, you have been told by the press that I was the "author of the bill," "presented it to Congress," "got it referred to my committee," "engineered it through the House," and "carried it through the Senate;" and the Democratic papers add the statement that all this was done under the direction and in conspiracy with the President for the purpose of raising his own pay; and these essays generally wind up as the end and finish of all condemnation by calling me the "arch salary-grabber."

I hardly need tell you, sir, that not one word of all this mass of assertion is true, and the men who wrote the articles either knew they were false, or, what was worse, did not know that what they said was true or false.

*THE NEWSPAPERS MAKE HIM OUT A GREAT "LEADER" IN CONGRESS.*

They do honor to my capacity overmuch. These falsehoods universally accord to me the ability to carry a measure, of the most flagrant wrong as they claim, through both House and Senate, of course against the moral sense, the conscientious scruples and the better judgment of a majority of the members of both Houses. Weeks, however, hardly had passed since these very same newspapers denied over and over again that I had any consideration at all in Congress, or claim to be considered as "leader" even in the lower House. Consistency in the averments of newspapers is as little to be hoped for as truth.

*HE ONLY CONSENTED TO ADVOCATE, WHEN HE BELIEVED IT RIGHT, AT THE REQUEST OF HIS COLLEAGUES.*

The salary measure was brought into the House without my knowledge or action, was referred to the Committee of the Judiciary without my knowledge, and had been voted

on in the House, so far as the President was concerned, in my absence. In the Committee of the Judiciary, it was referred to a sub-committee, of which I was not a member, and when the report came up for discussion, I expressed myself opposed to it, because I thought the President's salary was already sufficiently increased; as, since the time of Washington and Adams, Congress had, as I supposed, increased the allowances for furniture, servants, fuel, lights, and other matters, so as nearly to double the salary. Being assured by my colleagues on the committee that I was mistaken in that, I examined the matter carefully, and procured an inventory of the allowances made by Congress toward the expenses of John Adams, and an inventory of the present allowances in the same regard to General Grant, both which I gave to the House; and, somewhat to my surprise, I found that the perquisites of the President — if I may so call them — were not so great in degree as they were in the times of Adams and Jefferson, because in those times, the horses, stables, and appurtenances of every kind were furnished to the President from the Treasury, of which nothing now is furnished the President. Upon learning this, I consented in the committee that a bill should be reported, raising the salary of the President. I had no doubt as to the propriety of raising the pay of cabinet officers, for I knew that one cabinet officer, living in a not extravagantly-furnished house, which he had hired, paid six thousand dollars, out of his salary of eight thousand, for rent alone. Nor did I doubt as to the propriety of increasing the salary of the Judges of the Supreme Court, or the necessity of raising that of members of Congress. Being the only Republican on the committee in favor of the measure, who had been re-elected to the next Congress, after the bill reported by the sub-committee had been adopted by the Judiciary Committee, I was asked by my colleagues to present the bill to the House, and I did so at the earnest urging of



every member of the committee but one, and the only one who opposed the bill; one who has honored himself, for, so far as I know, he has not returned his pay, while others, who urged me to favor or "engineer" the bill, are reported as having done so.

*ALL THESE FACTS WERE STATED TO THE HOUSE IN HIS SPEECH,  
BUT WERE FALSIFIED BY THE NEWSPAPERS.*

The substance of these facts I gave to the House and the country when I offered the bills to the House, using the following words:—

"The first part of it raises the salary of the President of the United States. When that matter was first brought before the Committee on the Judiciary, I was opposed to it, because I thought that although the salary of the President had never been directly increased, yet that we had, by legislation at various times, added to the furniture of the White House and the perquisites of the President, so as to make a substantial increase of salary."

What, then, should be said of these unscrupulous and wicked libellers, who, in the face of the record, have deliberately falsified it, in order to slander a public officer, and to impose on the people, by publishing the exact opposite of the truth?

*HE EXPECTED CALUMNY, BUT NOT TO BE ACCUSED OF COVETOUSNESS.*

I felt quite sure at the time that whatever course I took in regard to the increase of pay would be the subject of newspaper defilement. Had I refused to present the bill, and voted against it, then it would have been said, "Having sufficient income of his own, and means of earning more by his profession, the salary was nothing to him; he knew that he could afford to live in Congress without any salary, and therefore played the demagogue by voting against sufficient compensation, so that no poor man could go to Congress." I confess, however, that I did not suppose the delightful stream of calumny which I knew would be poured upon me, whatever course I took, would contain an accusation that I regarded it as a question of money to myself; for the

hard labor of a long business life has given me the means of living without it, or any public employment, which I have not used in so niggardly manner as to give color to such de-traction.

I felt that if I lost what I have, I could earn more ; and if my constituents did not desire my public service for them at \$7,500 per year, there were those who have been, and would be willing to give me seven times as much in my profession.

*HE VOTED FOR THE BILL BECAUSE POOR MEN CANNOT LIVE IN WASHINGTON AND DO THEIR DUTIES ON THEIR SALARIES.*

I saw in Congress many faithful, efficient representatives, honest, temperate, economical men, unable to bring their families to Washington ; or if affection and duty induced them so to do, they lived in the third story of some second or third rate boarding-house, in a single room, combining office, parlor, sitting-room, and bedroom in one, so that the rest of their means could be used in educating their children, or keeping up the homestead, that they might return to it at the end of their term of service. I knew that some of the men of whom I have spoken were obliged to borrow money and pledge their salaries in advance to pay their way and support their families. I saw them exposed, day by day, to the pressing temptations of whoever should offer them other means of getting money to supply their wants, and I knew that some of them had yielded, and disgraced themselves, their colleagues and their country by so doing. I pitied the needs and the struggle for the means of living which had induced them to it, and felt from my soul that such ought not to be the condition of a Representative of the American people in its Congress.

*THEY ARE TEMPTED INTO SPECULATIONS, WHICH OUGHT NOT TO BE.*

I can easily conceive what must be the force of temptation to a man with a wife and children dependent upon him, his business broken up, and his profession gone while in

the public service, to offer him even ten shares in some scheme or speculation like *Crédit Mobilier*, or *Cedar Rapids Bonds*, or *Hubbard Silver Mine*, which promised large returns, if aided by Congressional legislation, so that, in fact, they become the price of his vote.

*ALL THOSE WHO CONDUCT AFFAIRS SHOULD BE ADEQUATELY PAID.*

If the country wants honest public servants, it must pay them adequately. The rule is axiomatic. That individual, that bank, or other business corporation, pinching the pay of clerks and servants below the means of living in the manner others of their walk in life do live, becomes in morals and in fact responsible for the sure dishonesty, thus induced, and are justly punished therefor, by the peculations and losses that as surely follow.

*BELIEVING THE INCREASE OF SALARY RIGHT, HE TAKES ALL THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR VOTING IT.*

Desiring and intending a poor man shall have the opportunity to represent the people in Congress in either House, and be so paid that he can stand erect among his fellows, and feel himself entirely independent so far as an adequate support is concerned; to remove all wish or desire to get perquisites, or to overdraw stationery or allowances; to enable him to employ a clerk to aid him in doing the business and in answering the correspondence of his constituents, — not an unonerous burden, which, as you may well guess, in my own case, and doubtless in many others, amounts to more than ten thousand letters a year, — I voted for, advocated, “engineered,” and made myself responsible for — however the same may be phrased — an increase of salary to the President, judges, members of Cabinet, and of Congress, to every degree in my power, and am glad that I was able to bring it about to the extent charged upon me. It is a responsibility from which I do not shrink, and I shall neither falsify my acts nor prevaricate myself in palliation or excuse.



*HE HAS LIVED DOWN THE SLANDERS UPON HIM BY HIS COUNTRY'S  
ENEMIES AND HIS OWN.*

For the reasons stated, and many others and perhaps better, to be stated, believing the measure right, I was not to be driven from it by calumny, personal abuse, vile detraction, or baseless slanders, — methods of attack which have been used on me since I entered the service of my country, began by her enemies and continued by mine. I felt that I had lived down and conquered all such by a blameless public life, against which no truthful charge can be brought.

*HIS RECORD, WHEN EXAMINED, SHOWS ALL ACCUSATIONS TO  
BE LIES.*

For more than twelve years, every act of my public or private life has been subjected to microscopic examination under a blaze of light supplied by the lurid malignity of my foes, whom I have neither courted nor conciliated, and every supposed spot discerned was thereon published by malicious, scandalous, and venal newspapers, whose worst I have defied, each of which accusations, when touched with Ithuriel's spear of truth, changes to a LIE.

*HE REJOICES THAT HE IS IN A POSITION TO DO WHAT HE THINKS  
IS RIGHT.*

"I rejoice, therefore, and am exceedingly glad" that there is one man who is able, from competence in private fortune, from fearlessness of undeserved censure, and indifference to all animadversion but the promptings of his own judgment, to dare to do that which he firmly believes ought to be done, regardless of the support of cowards who never distinguish between a right thing and an unpopular one, or the clamors of demagogues endeavoring to strike down their rivals and betters at the expense of the overthrow of all that is right and just. I believe the country will confide in and trust a public man who shows that he will stand by his conviction of duty and right, act fear-

lessly and firmly under whatever circumstances of raging storm or beating winds, more than in those who trim their sails to every wind, having no compass to guide their course, but steer only as they are wafted by a favoring popular breeze.

*HE ASKS NO HIGHER FAME THAN THAT OF BEING STEADFAST TO  
HIS CONVICTIONS.*

If what I have done in regard to this measure has tended to convince the American people that whatever of their interests may be confided to my care will be acted upon according to the dictates of my judgment and conscience, regardless of all consequences personal to myself; that my course will be onward and forward, true to the nation's good, at whatever of personal hazard or under whatever pressure to cause me to swerve from the right, so that they will know where to look in time of public peril, calamity, or commotion, for a man upon whose fixedness of purpose and steadfastness in action they may with surety rely, I shall, in so far, have acquired that place in the good opinion of my countrymen, which most of all I desire in the present, as fitting me for service to the people, or as a name and fame to leave to my children as an incentive to duty well done.

I am, very truly,

Your friend and representative,

BENJ. F. BUTLER.

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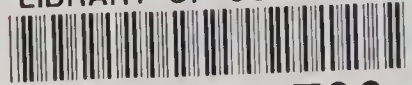




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